

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

DEAR EDITOR,

May an outsider make one or two suggestions on the subject of Children's Friendships, and ask two or three questions? It is a subject, which (if one is a parent,) comes invariably to the front of one's thoughts sometime or other during the "noisy years" of one's own children's growing time.

It is a subject, which (even if one be not such a tremendously responsible thing as a parent) is bound to face us with regard to other people's children in whom perhaps one has pro. tem. a keen interest. It is a subject which is bound to interest—bound to perplex—bound to be provocative of serious thought. For, after all, what can belong more to the region of serious thought than to help forward or mar the friendships of a human being? And this power of helping forward or hindering our children's friendships is largely ours during their initial years of life.

It is a very difficult thing to settle off-hand (as many people in authority, by the way, are not in the least afraid to do), whether such and such a friend will be a wise investment for that boy or that girl whose whole heart seems set, for the moment, on acquiring the offered comradeship. It is difficult for this very reason, that in a great measure we are strangers to "the tenderest heart, and next our own," which knows not "half the reasons why we smile or cry," consequently we cannot really know whether, perhaps, the way that friend will act and re-act on the boy or girl in question, will not be the healthiest sedative or rouser which could be desired. Certainly nothing should be done towards checking a friendship before one has used one's intuition to the very uttermost. (Some of us, it is true, have no more intuition than a grain of mustard seed, and in that case one must be careful to water it continually with suggestions from other minds.) One can find out, generally, what are the things the friends like doing together; what it was that first drew them together; what

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they talk about most when together; their plans for to-day, or next week. Putting two and two together can be trusted to make a clear four, in most cases.

But do let us remember above all, that it is very easy to spoil a friendship, but impossible to make one. No one can *make* a real heart-friendship for another person; so that we must "let that alone for ever." Unless a friendship is spontaneous, even in childhood, it will "last with care for long," perhaps, but will cease unaccountably when circumstances interfere, and meetings become difficult in after life.

To some people, friendships—worthy of that great name—are the most inspiring power of happiness that ever comes their way. In dealing with their beginnings we can at least put the shoes from off our feet, remembering that if we tread unwarily, we may be damaging—however good our motive—a friendship which would have been one of their sources of happiness, when their life's sun was high in the heavens.

I am, Yours faithfully,

J. G. SIEVEKING.

DEAR EDITOR,

May I bring before the Association's notice the exceedingly well-illustrated "Cassell's History of England" now coming out in parts, 6d. each.

Also a new Geography, published by Nelson & Co. in parts, and entitled "The World and its People."

Yours sincerely,

E. EDWARDS.